

HAOLES IN HAWAII

"NO ACK!"

What Is Haole, Anyway?

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Having established the origins of haole in Hawai'i's colonization, this chapter considers the many different constructions of haole produced by haoles and others from "first contact" to present. As stated earlier, my interest is not so much in trying to define what haole is—as if one definition were possible—as in exploring the different ways it is produced. Haole is dynamic. Not only is it not just one thing, it is also never still—it changes across time, place, and context. How the early missionaries represented themselves differed radically from how Kanaka Maoli constructed them, which differed again from how plantation workers talked about their haole bosses. Understanding haole means thinking about all of these constructs and how they are interrelated with other racial constructions in Hawai'i.

Constructions of the three dominant racial-ethnic groupings in Hawai'i—haoles, locals, and native Hawaiians—are what they are because of each other. Native Hawaiians trace their genealogies back to the time before Cook's arrival. Local identity and culture originated in the plantation system and is an amalgamation of Kanaka Maoli culture with those immigrant groups brought to labor in the sugarcane and pineapple fields. These include Japanese, Chinese, Filipino, Korean, Portuguese, and Samoan immigrants, among others. There could be no local without incorporation of certain elements of Hawaiian culture and resistance to haole hegemony. There could be no white colonizer without a racialized native. Processes of identity formation and racialization (the ways groups come to be understood in racial terms) do not just move in one direction; they move in many directions simultaneously.

My analysis focuses on haole as a colonial/neocolonial form of whiteness situated in Hawai'i, and thus I foreground processes of racialization.



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Some literature refers to *haole* as an ethnic identity. Other authors slide easily between race, ethnicity, and nationality. Different constructions of *haole* contain elements of all three because they are intrinsically related. I choose to highlight race—race talk, racialization, racial formation, racial production, racial identity, racial politics, racism, and so forth. I focus on active processes of racialization because race is a sociopolitical means of classifying people, not a “natural” biological or scientific fact. Within the context of U.S. imperialism, race has been the foundation for dominant systems of power, the engine driving the imperial machine. By focusing on racial production in Hawai‘i, I look at the different deployments of power that produce and reproduce the violent fictions of race, dispossessing some, privileging others, and segregating us from each other and, for those of us with multiple racial identities, often from ourselves.

Theories of racial production contend that racial identities are relational, that the formation of an “us” occurs simultaneously with the formation of a “them.” Furthermore, the two processes do not just occur simultaneously, but are also dependent on one another and are mutually constitutive. Whiteness produces itself in opposition to racialized others. It is, so the story goes, what “they” are not. Racialized “others” in turn, produce certain counternarratives or counterdiscourses of whiteness—stories and knowledge about whiteness that runs against dominant (white) ideas. In studying *haole*, we see how constructions including “savage,” “Hawaiian,” “Oriental,” “Asian,” and “local” were, and are, used to mark and patrol the boundaries of *haole* constructions of *haole*. At the same time, Hawaiian and local constructions of *haole* help define the borders of those identities. It is through this interplay and its symbolic and material manifestations that *haole* gains meaning and significance in multiple, often conflicting, ways.

I begin by exploring *haole* constructions of *haole* starting with discoverer and savior, the dominant projections in the first century of *haole*. I then turn to the more contemporary identities of *kama‘āina*, “Hawaiian at heart,” and *hapa*. Manifest destiny and Christian proselytizing animate the early constructions. A general resistance to being called “*haole*” and a desire to belong—a yearning to “go native” or become “Hawaiian”—drives the last three. If many *haoles* could have their way, the word “*haole*” would be banned as impolite at best, pejorative at worst. One can almost mark one’s calendar by the cyclical debate in local media over the use of the word (I analyze this in depth in the next chapter). It is a testament to Hawaiian-local resistance and cultural

insistence that the term maintains its usage and salience. The turn to *kama‘āina*, Hawaiian at heart, or *hapa* comes when continental labels including “Caucasian,” “Anglo,” or “American” fail to stick.

In the second part of the chapter I discuss native Hawaiian and local constructions of *haole*. Here I draw on Chicana scholar Angie Chabram-Dernersesian’s concept of “native constructions of whiteness” and emphasize that understanding any form of whiteness requires looking at it from the perspective of people of color. While there is increasing overlap between them, Hawaiian constructions focus on *haole* as colonizer, whereas local constructions originate in the experience of *haole* as plantation owner and oligarch. In Hawai‘i, these constructions represent forms of racialization-from-below or counternarratives, where a subordinate group’s constructions of the dominant group are one form of resistance. In this way we can think of local and Hawaiian constructions of *haole* as a way of talking back to white supremacy.

Local constructions of *haole* also emphasize performative *haoleness* or acting *haole*, the exhibiting of attitudes and actions that run counter to local and Hawaiian social values. This understanding of *haole* helps to destabilize essentialized notions that would tie *haole* solely to white people in Hawai‘i. The HCE admonishment “no *ack*” is used to call people out when they are puffing themselves up with claims or actions beyond their abilities or social positioning. One might use this phrase with a local friend who takes on airs of an arrogant *haole*, or with a *haole* who insists he is really Hawaiian. I use it as the title for this chapter to highlight the performative, dynamic, contested, and contingent aspects of *haole*.

Just as *haole* needs to be analyzed within the institutional processes of colonization, it must also be located in its relationships to other social groupings and racial discourses, which are also central to colonization. This relational analysis makes apparent that *haole* has always been a contested category, understood in multiple ways by various constituencies. Part of how *haole* has gained significance is located in how *haole* is constructed and the consequences of those constructs.

Haole Constructions of Self

Haole self-productions began with Captain Cook’s landing in 1778, the beginning of the influx of *haole* to Hawai‘i. These productions were meant for various constituencies at various times: the *haole* themselves,

the international community, the various funders of haole missionary work or enterprise, the native Hawaiian population, the American public, and the U.S. government.

Discoverers and Saviors

When haole first arrived in the islands they talked about how they "discovered" the islands and everything in them. Then they set about "saving" things—first Hawaiians, through religion, education, property ownership, and agriculture; and then Hawai'i, through the utilization of "underutilized" prized agricultural land and through the fulfillment of manifest destiny, bringing the fledgling islands under the protective wing of the American government. These actions presented purpose and justifications for the being and the doing of haole in Hawai'i.

As explored in chapter 1, the production of haole as "discoverer" was the first to legitimize haole presence in Hawai'i. It was a critical first step in the Western imperial project and was managed on the ground through the issuing of proclamations, the planting of flags, the erecting of monuments, and the distribution of "gifts." The haole "discovery" of the islands later became important as the starting point for the dominant version of Hawaiian history: before discovery there was no history, only "darkness," chaos, and wildness.

Through this story of discovery Kanaka Maoli are nearly dehumanized and folded into the wilderness, disabling any competing claim to the islands. According to this narrative, it is a tribute to the haole that Hawai'i was brought into modern times and civilization. Anthropologist Elvi Whittaker demonstrates how many books in the canon of Hawaiian historiography begin either with Cook's "discovery" or with the "wild" nature of a volcano erupting from the ocean. She argues that "these openings tell us more about ourselves than they do about the world of the Polynesians. . . . When Captain Cook steps ashore, in actuality or in print, the very act of doing so has become possible only because of a world view which has 'making discoveries' as a way of making sense of the world" (Whittaker 1986, 8).

The theme of "saving" Hawaiians through religion is strongest in the period of missionary dominance (roughly 1820–1850) for obvious reasons. Missionaries were not the only haoles in the islands, but they were the most influential, and their self-representation as agents of salvation held forth for a number of decades and continues to influence conceptions of haole today. Many missionaries no doubt truly believed

conversion and westernization were good for Hawaiians. This sense of righteousness was mixed with a good deal of anxiety about being beyond the frontier. As political theorists Phyllis Turnbull and Kathy Ferguson point out, "The colonizers of Hawai'i brought with them both a profound sense of entitlement and a fear of engulfment. . . . Hawai'i's perceived deficiencies provoked both desire (take it, fill it, make it ours) and anxiety (it's different, it's not like us, it's looking back at us). . . . Hawai'i both beckons and disturbs its newcomers" (Turnbull and Ferguson 1997, 99).

There are copious writings (letters, diaries, reports, books) by missionaries about what was, in their minds, their formidable mission. Their writings explicitly express the anxiety Turnbull and Ferguson describe. Of their arrival in the islands in 1820, Reverend Hiram Bingham wrote,

As we proceeded to shore, the multitudinous, shouting, and almost naked natives . . . exhibited the appalling darkness of the land which we had come to enlighten. Here . . . appeared a just representation of a nation . . . in as deep degradation, ignorance, pollution and destitution as if the riches of salvation . . . had never been provided to enrich and enlighten their souls. (Bingham 1969, 86)

Bingham's intense anxiety only seems to have escalated during his tenure, his project of enlightenment having encountered more resistance than he anticipated. "So darkness and danger have sometimes hung over our young mission, and that infant nation whom we were attempting to guide out of deep embarrassment and gloom, when we seemed ready to be 'swallowed up quick'" (Bingham 1969, 383). Within such an environment, the missionaries frantically tried to reinforce boundaries between themselves and the natives, hoping to keep from being "swallowed up."

Much less concern was expressed for how the salvation project was swallowing up Hawaiians and Hawaiian culture. The exception, expressed by a few women, was concern about the mission's enormous influence and Hawaiians' faith in their civilizing project. Missionary wife Laura Judd wrote in 1828, "We seem to be regarded as but little lower than the angels, and the implicit confidence of these people in our goodness is almost painful" (Judd 1961, 73). The irony, of course,

is that it was the Hawaiians, not the missionaries, who bore the pain of "aloha betrayed."¹

After a couple of decades of effort, many missionaries felt their project of "enlightenment" had failed. This failure they almost exclusively blamed on the Hawaiians. In her article lauding missionary women, historian Patricia Grimshaw sympathetically wrote, "The story of three decades of intercultural contact in Hawai'i, a story of frustration for the mission women and evasion by the Hawaiians, was fraught with considerable tension and unhappiness for both groups of women. Neither side could triumph: by the late 1840s, stalemate was reached" (Grimshaw 1985, 73). There are many interesting aspects to this statement. First, Grimshaw uses the phrase "intercultural contact," which connotes a certain mutual appreciation and respect. There is very little in the writings of missionaries to indicate they considered there was anything "intercultural" at all about the encounter. Second, "evasion" by the Hawaiians is noted, but neither Grimshaw nor other historians have done much to analyze this as a strategic form of resistance and cultural survival.² Finally, the passage uses the metaphor of contest or war—there was "stalemate," neither could "triumph"—which seems to belie the idea of intercultural exchange.

As indicated in chapter 1, in the 1840s haole discourse began to shift from being dominated by conversion to more secular forms of saving the Hawaiians. This shift was tied to the increasing importance of the islands in international trade and military strategy. As world powers began to pay more attention to Hawai'i and Hawai'i formed diplomatic relations with a number of nations, missionary families began to think of the islands as a permanent residence rather than just a temporary outpost. As they began building their lives in the islands, they began to think about schools for their children (Punahou School was established in 1841), government, property, and economic opportunity. Missionary attitudes seemed to suggest that if Hawaiians could not be made to see that conversion would save them, surely they could be convinced of the need for civilizing themselves through education, property ownership, agriculture, and democratic government. Thus efforts in education were redoubled, a constitutional monarchy was established, the Māhele converted 'āina into property, and Hawaiians were encouraged to labor in capitalist agriculture.

In 1853 the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) dissolved its mission in Hawai'i, declaring the islands

sufficiently Christianized to have their own home mission. The missionaries were effectively cut loose, officially encouraged to become Hawaiian citizens and purchase property (Wilson 2000, 533). By this point, the dominant thinking was that if the Hawaiians were still having trouble, it was certainly through no fault of the missionaries, who, after all, had spent decades on conversion, education, and all forms of civilizing efforts.

As discussed in chapter 1, the discourse of saving Hawai'i becomes increasingly tied to a rhetoric characterizing the Hawaiian monarchy as corrupt, ineffective, and tyrannical. This characterization hits a vicious racist, sexist, and demeaning climax with the campaign to defame Queen Lili'uokalani in the years before and after the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy. For example, missionary son Reverend Sereno Bishop charged the queen with having no royal heredity, being "African" in appearance, and not being respected by her people (Kualapai 2005, 45). These negative representations of the queen and other ali'i enabled a glorification of American (read: haole) Hawai'i. A senior member of the *Pacific Commercial Advertiser* staff printed an opinion of many haoles in 1900: "In spite of the large number of Hawaiians and Orientals on these islands this is essentially an American community. White men, chiefly Americans, have built it up from nothing and have made it one of the most prosperous and modern and progressive places in the world" (as quoted in Basson 2005, 592). It logically followed that, having saved the islands and converted them into prosperous and modern places, the haole was not going to let recalcitrant natives squander all that had been gained.

And so it was not difficult for the haole conspirators against the queen to narrate themselves as revolutionaries throwing off the yoke of royal despotism. That is the representation most supported by haole historians through the decades.³ Not surprisingly, Thurston Twigg-Smith—grandson of Lorin Thurston, a key architect of the overthrow—strongly promotes this view in his book *Hawaiian Sovereignty: Do the Facts Matter?*: "At the time of the Revolution, following the time-honored international practice of revolt as a last-ditch means for people to change their governments, control of the Islands was seized from the Queen by a volunteer army of Hawai'i residents" (Twigg-Smith 1998, 7–8). Twigg-Smith, and Thurston before him, drew easy analogies between the Hawai'i coup and the American Revolution. Yet Tom Coffman writes, "The Committee of Annexation . . . represented as little as

2 percent of the population, and never more than 4 or 5 percent. This was what Thurston described as the popular revolution that became the stock subject of so much written history" (Coffman 1998, 124).

Eric Love, a scholar of the annexation of Hawai'i and the Philippines, asserts that Hawai'i was annexed for the sake of the haoles. While Love overstates his argument by not considering the other factors motivating Congress (Hawai'i's strategic military location, for example), race and racial politics did play a significant role in the annexation debate.⁴ Haole annexationists argued that the hard work they had done civilizing the islands was threatened by the incompetence of the monarchy, and then the royalists after the overthrow, and a gathering "oriental menace" in the East.

The "oriental menace" has become more prominent in contemporary arguments justifying the overthrow. Haoles (and haolified non-Japanese locals) often tout the line of "better America than Japan," following the inevitability theory of Hawai'i's colonization. One such letter in the *Honolulu Weekly* states, "Hawai'i was destined to be taken over by some greater power. As for how the Hawaiians would have fared under Japanese occupation, there are numerous examples. . . . [P]opulations were subjected to the horrors of torture, rape, enslavement and execution" (Lee 2003). The U.S., by contrast, is supposed to be understood as a benevolent occupier.

Love notes that when Lorrin Thurston went to lobby Congress in 1897, he did all he could to quell fears of embracing such a nonwhite territory by representing Hawai'i as the white child of Uncle Sam. He opportunistically counted Portuguese as white to inflate those numbers (as discussed later in this chapter, Portuguese are not considered haole, but part of the local) and claimed that the Chinese would leave if Hawai'i were annexed (Love 1997, 157–163). A year later, when the Senate Foreign Relations Committee met to consider an annexation resolution, it was clear Thurston's words had hit their mark. In their report calling for annexation, the committee wrote, "The really distinctive feature of [Hawaiian] society is that it is American in all its traits and habits" (as quoted in Love 1997, 175).

The idea of a march of progress in Hawai'i led by the capable haole—from darkness and chaos to Christianity, education, capitalism, and, finally, inevitable Americanization—was successfully mobilized by the annexationists. In 1893 missionary son Samuel Chapman Armstrong wrote it was commonly accepted that "the conquest by American

missionaries of the Hawaiian Islands for a degree of Christian civilization gives the United State both a claim and an obligation in the matter—a claim to be considered first in the final disposition of that country, and an obligation to save the decency and civilization in that utterly broken-down monarchy" (as quoted in Love 1997, 130). Saving Hawai'i from a "broken-down" government was one thing; incorporating it into the motherland was quite another. To become a state, Hawai'i would again have to be represented as white as possible. "Annexation made the triumph of white values and ideology through 'Americanization' a formal necessity if the new territory was ever to achieve statehood" (Bell 1984, 36). And so the haole elite recognized the need to flex their dominance for all to see. In testimony before Congress in 1921, the secretary of the powerful Hawaiian Sugar Planters Association reported, "The Territory of Hawai'i is now and is going to be American; it is going to remain American under any condition and we are going to control the situation out there. The white race, the white people, the Americans in Hawai'i are going to dominate and will continue to dominate—there is no question about it" (as quoted in Okamura 1998, 272).

Having constructed themselves as the clear choice for political leadership, haoles continued to consolidate their political power after annexation. They formed alliances with native Hawaiians against the growing population of Asian immigrants, who they feared would seize power. Conveniently for the haole power brokers, anti-Asian racism and discrimination were at their height nationally, and (although as a territory, now bound to uphold the nettlesome U.S. doctrine of equal rights) Asian immigrants were barred from naturalization by acts of Congress. It was, in fact, this particularly anti-Asian racism that scholars credit in prolonging Hawai'i's territorial period. Roger Bell, in his book on statehood, contends, "The racial and political complexion of Hawai'i's voters, and the anticipated impact they would have on the fortunes of conservative and racially sensitive factions of Congress, were the central reasons why it was for so long denied equality as a state" (Bell 1984, 6).⁵

Mutual Constitution of Haole

The period between annexation and statehood offers a good illustration of the processes through which haole was constructed relationally. Haole constructions of self were successful to the extent that they were coupled with the racialization of others in Hawai'i. Hawai'i scholar J. Kēhaulani Kauanui lays out how the racialization of Kanaka Maoli was

part of haole constructions of haole. She notes that on the continent, early constructions of whiteness are established in the triangulation of Indian/Black/white, while in Hawai'i, Hawaiian/Asian/white formed a similar triangulation (Kauanui 2000, 28). Using work by legal theorist Cheryl Harris, Kauanui demonstrates that whiteness is a form of property in that whiteness confers on its owners rights of disposition, use and enjoyment, reputation and status, and exclusion. Harris makes the point that these functions of whiteness have meaning and value only because they are denied to others (Harris 1993, 1744). In other words, they are part of the defining and patrolling of racial borders. There would be no whiteness if there were no others who are excluded from the privileges of whiteness. In Hawai'i, there would be no haole without native Hawaiians and locals.

Kauanui adds "the right to include" to Harris' list and describes the politics of assimilation of native peoples (Kauanui 2000, 54). She shows how Hawaiians, like Native Americans, could be accepted as white if their blood was "diluted" enough and their performance assimilated enough (what counts as enough is a moving target). Much more can be gained by subsuming natives (not the least of which are property and assumed absolution from the "sins" of colonization) than continuing to lock them out. And so the 1921 Hawaiian Homes Commission Act launched government efforts at the rehabilitation and assimilation of Hawaiians: "Selective assimilation has played as much a role in the formation of whiteness as has exclusion. For American Indians and Hawaiians, the legacies of inclusion have worked against collective assertions of legal subjectivity by conferring the franchise rather than sovereign recognition" (Kauanui 2000, 78).

By contrast, Asians have historically been seen as much more threatening in their otherness, making them forever foreign and suspect, even when assimilated. There is a well-documented history of this in Hawai'i that includes suppression of language, denial of citizenship, and many other forms of discrimination (Tamura 1993, Odo 2004). By playing Asians against Hawaiians, and "native" Hawaiians against "part" Hawaiians, haole managed the borders of haole, granting and denying access. Part of what makes haole haole is just these processes of mutual constitution.

Hawaiian, Kama'āina, "Hawaiian at Heart," and Hapa

Appropriation (taking as one's own something of another's, especially with regard to culture), the twin to assimilation and inclusion,

plays an equally strong role in processes of racialization. The blatant colonial assertion by haole that they are Hawaiian seems to have first appeared in the period around the overthrow, and some still assert it today. The appropriation of kama'āina, the creation of "Hawaiian at heart," and the wiggle toward hapa are some common contemporary responses to being named haole. These claims to being anything but haole lay bare desperate longing to escape haole and become naturalized by going native.

In 1894, in testimony supporting the overthrow, Albert F. Judd, missionary son and chief justice of the Republic's Supreme Court, stated, "I am a Hawaiian. . . . I was born in this country. I love this country. It is my country" (Kualapai 2005, 39–40). While we might understand this as a claim to Hawaiian citizenship (as opposed to indigeneity), which many haole had prior to the overthrow, the anxious repudiation with which it is made should give us pause. Judd's purpose was to set up a logic whereby his actions and desires were seen as patriotic. He was, in his view, part of a revolutionary government selflessly acting on behalf of Hawai'i. Twigg-Smith follows suit a century later, claiming five generations of missionary blood make him Hawaiian, while using the technology of blood quantum to diminish ten generations of native Hawaiian ancestry by claiming dilution: "As a fifth-generation resident, this writer considers himself every bit as much a 'Hawaiian' as anyone whose family roots here can be traced back ten generations but who might at this distance from his native ancestor possess only one-thirty-second Hawaiian blood" (Twigg-Smith 1998, 4–5).

Houston Wood explores the processes by which missionaries and haole elite began appropriating "kama'āina" and using it as a badge of belonging. Kama'āina is a Kanaka Maoli word that literally translates to "land child" and means "native-born, one born in a place, host" (Pukui and Elbert 1986, 124). Those haole originally claiming kama'āina status were a select group largely from New England with political and economic power and close association with the ali'i through intermarriage. They sought to distinguish and separate themselves from haole newcomers and those of lower social status. While the term is still used by some in this way, haole commoners democratized it, adopting the label for those who had been in the islands for at least seven years or who were born in the islands: "Kama'āina was thus transformed from a concept denoting Native-born into a term meaning 'island-born,' or even merely 'well-acquainted with the islands.'" By adopting a Native word

to describe themselves, Euroamericans obscured both their origins and the devastating effects their presence was having on the Native-born" (Wood 1999, 41). Further appropriation has taken place, and the term is now sometimes used to refer to all residents, regardless of race or class. This broad application has proven very successful as a marketing tool by conferring both belonging and status on nonnative residents—for example, kama'āina vacation packages, entrance fees, and supermarket cards.

"Hawaiian at heart" has more potentially insidious meanings. Wood suggests that this phrase began to circulate with the boom in tourism that followed statehood. It was a way of ensuring haole visitors could have the exotic "Hawaiian experience" without staying years to earn the kama'āina badge (Wood 1999, 48–49). You could be "Hawaiian at heart" by simply wading in the ocean and eating some kalua pig at a commercial lūau.

The "Hawaiian at heart" label has come to be used by haole residents in similar fashion to kama'āina, to assert belonging and long-term residence while additionally indicating an affinity for, or knowledge of, Hawaiian culture. In some New Age circles, it parallels the phenomenon of white people declaring Native American ancestry—which, given five hundred years of colonization, is harder to trace.⁶ In her research, political scientist Kelly Kraemer found that Hawaiians were generally skeptical of anyone proclaiming her or himself "Hawaiian at heart." One interviewee wonders, "What happened to *their* heart?" Another states, "When we meet a non-native who wants to be supportive we kind of hold our breath and hope that this isn't gonna be another burden to us or another idiot who thinks they wanna be Hawaiian. . . . We all should celebrate our own history" (as quoted in Kraemer 2000, 362).

While Kraemer's interviewees display a certain level of humor and tolerance, the claim can open deep scars, especially when coupled with an arrogance about knowing and practicing Hawaiian culture. Native Hawaiian scholar Lisa Kahaleole Hall writes,

"Hawaiians at heart" assume that knowing and appreciating Hawaiian culture is enough to transform them into being Hawaiian. Indeed, some have gone so far as to claim that they are more Hawaiian than actual Hawaiians, because they have greater cultural or language knowledge. [B]ut . . . all contemporary Hawaiians come from a past where our parents',

grandparents', or great-grandparents' use of Hawaiian language and culture was forbidden, legislated against, brutally punished, or a combination of these. Non-Hawaiians without this history do not carry a legacy of internalized fear, shame and anger to impede their study, nor do they feel guilt about this history. (Hall 2005, 410–411)

Hall goes on to take issue with those who use claims of Hawaianness to make money by selling spiritual retreats and experiences. This phenomenon of appropriating and marketing indigenous culture, often by representing oneself as more native than the natives, is very familiar to Native Americans who worry about a scourge of "white shamans and plastic medicine men."⁷

Native scholar Eva Marie Garrouette studied the issue of self-identified Native Americans and the phenomenon of "ethnic switching," or being a "born-again Indian." Her native respondents gave mixed responses. Some saw it as outright appropriation: "How do you get to be the sort of victor who can claim to be the vanquished also?" Others want to be more inclusive: "One of the fundamental human rights of individuals and groups includes the right to self-identification and self-definition" (as quoted in Garrouette 2003, 55 and 94). A number of Native American scholars see dangers in heavily policing native identity boundaries. They argue that not all ethnic switching is done for personal gain. It can also allow for "the introduction of new resources into tribal communities—resources ranging from the professional, intellectual, and financial, to the cultural, emotional, and spiritual" (Garrouette 2003, 97).

Kraemer's Kanaka Maoli interviewees also note that the designation of "Hawaiian at heart" has very different meaning when offered by a Hawaiian rather than as self-declared. It can be used by one Hawaiian to another to communicate, "She's okay, she gets it." Rona Tamiko Halualani discusses the reappropriation of "Hawaiian at heart" by diasporic Hawaiians in their Aloha Clubs as a way to allow for membership of non-Hawaiian friends and family:

A "Hawaiian at heart" identity position is invoked among mainland Hawaiians as a localized adjustment to a different social fabric of the mainland. It works on one level as a form of public outreach through which community membership

boundaries are adapted, and yet, internally, it remains within a differentiating hierarchy of Hawaiian identity. . . . [S]everal members cast "Hawaiians at heart" as friends but not "true/authentic *kanaka*." (Halualani 2002, 200)

"Hapa" is a relative newcomer to the block of haole self-identifications. Originally meaning "of mixed blood" in Hawaiian (Pukui and Elbert 1986, 58), it is more commonly understood in HCE as the short form of "hapa haole," meaning half or part haole. My anecdotal experience in Hawai'i is that it is often invoked by a haole parent about his or her child, conceivably as a way to claim belonging for and through that child. Conversely, it can be used by locals to indicate that a child has a haole parent. Its popularity, especially among young people—hapa clubs, hapa music, and hapa literature—is another indication of the powerful desire to be something other than haole.

A University of Hawai'i professor shared a relevant story about her teenage son. One day he told her that he was hapa, and when she asked how, he said because she was haole and his dad was Israeli. He was creatively trying to find an out for himself, like so many haole youth. I can only guess that when he proclaimed his "hapaness" to his local friends, he found that whiteness is not parsed in the islands in the same ways it is on the continent.⁸

Hapa identity is often romanticized by haoles and held out as an indicator of racial harmony, a symbol of island-style colorblind ideology. This narrative tends to ignore historical and continuing haole dominance by pretending all is well in paradise. Curt Sanburn, former editor of the popular *Honolulu Weekly*, ends a lament about feeling like an "Ur-haole" growing up by offering hapa identity as the hope for the future: "I am optimistic that our children, the statistically large golden generation coming up behind us, will eventually dissolve most of the real and imagined racial divisions that trouble our politics" (Sanburn 1998). This story, of interracial coupling as the agent for "dissolving" the harms and injustices of colonialism and white supremacy, is undoubtedly familiar. I return to this in my discussion of the racial harmony discourse in the next chapter.

In the last decade "hapa" has made a splash on the continent, especially among young Asian Americans who have retranslated it yet again. For them the featured identity is Asian, so that while it usually means half Asian and half white, it can mean half Asian and half something

else, or simply mixed Asian with other racial identities (it is not used in this way in Hawai'i since here the same group will identify as local or by a particular Asian ancestry). It is probable that the increasing popularity of contemporary Hawaiian music on the continent and the persistent desire to go native are influencing factors in this appropriation.

Native Hawaiian and Local Constructions of Haole

Chicana scholar Angie Chabram-Dernersesian points out that studies of whiteness often focus only on dominant white identities, which leads to static, essentialized notions of whiteness. These include ideas about whiteness as an unmarked category, an invisible center, and a naturalized identity. While many white people on the continent may experience whiteness in this way, it is certainly not universally understood in these terms, especially in communities of color. Hawai'i is an obvious case in point, as discussed in my introduction. Not enough attention has been paid in whiteness studies to the ways people of color construct whiteness, despite the richness of that literature. Chabram-Dernersesian finds that counterdiscourses of whiteness within the Chicana/o community serve multiple purposes. They help Chicanas/os navigate and name social relations, negotiate a political identity (Chicana/o), think about other forms of oppression, and imagine different social locations for self and others (Chabram-Dernersesian 1999, 111).

I believe counterdiscourses of haole play similar roles for Kanaka Maoli and locals, which could be part of the reason why many are angered by suggestions that the term be banned. It is not just that "haole" is a legitimate Hawaiian and HCE word; more important, it is an extremely useful *political* word.⁹ "Haole" does not simply translate to "white" or "Caucasian," as many haoles would like to suggest, because it carries with it a specific legacy of colonization. No one says, "Eh, Caucasian," because that has no meaning in the islands. Clearly, counterdiscourses of haole help in the navigation of social relations, the naming of colonial processes, and the exposing of haole hegemony. It is also useful to think about the ways Hawaiian and local counterdiscourses of haole allow for the negotiation of Kanaka Maoli and local political identities.

Chabram-Dernersesian writes about how Chicana/o counterdiscourses of whiteness deterritorialize and bracket whiteness—they move whiteness from the center of the political geography to the sidelines. Local and native Hawaiian counterdiscourses of haole involve similar elements of deterritorializing and bracketing in that they mark haole, calling it

into question and obstructing its efforts at naturalization. The simple phrase "Eh, haole" can do that work. Local and native Hawaiian counter-discourses are now quite interrelated, but understanding them more fully requires looking at their evolutions. Kanaka Maoli experience with, and therefore discourse about, haole has a longer history than that of the local and is founded in colonialism. The relationship between the local and the haole began in sugar and pineapple plantations decades later.

Native Hawaiian Constructions of Haole

The early Kanaka Maoli understanding of the haole is the subject of much debate and an area requiring much more research. Hawaiian-language primary sources have barely been tapped for what they might yield on the subject, limiting the current discussion to English-language sources. Once these sources are researched, much of what we currently understand about Hawaiian historiography will inevitably change, including what we know about early Hawaiian constructions of haole.

The breadth of the contemporary arguments run from whether Kanaka Maoli believed Captain Cook was a god, to why the ali'i enlisted haole as leaders and advisers, to why the ali'i easily accepted Christianity and Western law. Clearly, just as haole constructions of themselves changed, so too did Kanaka Maoli constructions of themselves and of haole—many of which were undoubtedly quite different than the image the haole was presenting (or in the case of contemporary debates, re-presenting).

Anthropologists have engaged in considerable debate over whether or not Captain Cook was misrecognized as the Hawaiian god Lono. The notion of Cook as a god has been perpetuated in popular discourse as well. Lydia K. Kualapai writes, "The Eurocentric myth of preliterate natives venerating the awesome white man as a god has been central to the colonial discourse about Hawai'i since the early nineteenth century" (Kualapai 2001, 18). The scaffolding provided by this narrative supports the subsequent positionings by haole discussed earlier. If the natives believed the haole to be a god once, surely the haole could be savior of the people, the land, the government, and the territory. Kualapai and others pay attention to a more nuanced understanding of traditional Kanaka Maoli politics and cosmology. They ask questions about nonnative scholars' singular focus on studying natives, the desire to fix one single mind-set on Hawaiians at the time, and how ali'i actions may have been prompted by political necessity.¹⁰

Political necessity also seems to be a key to understanding ali'i willingness to rely on haole as advisers and to convert to Christianity and Western law. Rather than adopting a foreign ideology of racial hierarchy or seeing godlike qualities in the haole, it is certainly equally probable that the ali'i were assessing their rapidly changing world and making strategic judgments influenced by crisis, power, and desire. As discussed in chapter 1, Hawaiians were dying at a rate of nine out of ten, causing a cultural crisis far beyond any they had ever experienced. This at the same time haole power was mounting. Jonathan K. Osorio submits, "It is even conceivable that the chiefs saw their role in very traditional ways. If it was haole power that mattered in the world now, then it was up to the Ali'i to mediate that power to the rest of the community in the same way that the sacred chiefs had once mediated the power of Kū and Lono" (Osorio 2002, 38).

As is often the case, those with less power, and alternate desires, made different assessments of the haole (of course, as Osorio just pointed out, they also had less responsibility vis-à-vis the haole). As Samuel M. Kamakau contended at the time (printed in 1992), and Jonathan K. Osorio (2002) and Sally Engle Merry (2000) contend today, the maka'āinana were much more skeptical of and resistant to haole leadership and the imposition of Western law than were many of the ali'i. Consider this passage from Kamakau about the conversion to Western law:

The truth was, they were laws to change the old laws of the natives of the land and cause them to lick ti leaves like the dogs and gnaw bones thrown at the feet of strangers, while the strangers became their lords, and the hands and voices of strangers were raised over those of the native race. The commoners knew this and one and all expressed their disapproval and asked the king not to place foreigners in the offices of government lest the native race become a footstool for the foreigners. (Kamakau 1992, 339)

If, in the first century after contact, the ali'i tried to mediate haole power and the maka'āinana tried to resist it, Kanaka Maoli across the board saw the haole as increasingly gaining power and significance. In the above citations, Kamakau wrote of "strangers becoming lords" and Osorio speculates that ali'i felt "it was haole power that mattered in the world now." I think it is safe to say that in the diversity of early native

constructions of haole, the common thread was anxiety over growing haole power. It is interesting that anxiety seemed to be the key element to both early Hawaiian and haole constructions of haole. Haole anxiety over being engulfed by "the savage" caused larger-than-life self-representations. Native anxiety over these grandiose haole self-representations and their violent consequences prompted their resentment and caution.

After over two centuries of trying to understand, approximate, mitigate, and resist haole power, Hawaiians are experts on the subject. Kanaka Maoli discourses of haole share a good deal with local discourses, but with a colonial difference. Of all Hawai'i's diverse populations, the indigenous population is consistently the worst off. As I will discuss further in chapter 4, Kanaka Maoli have the highest unemployment, lowest life expectancy, highest alcohol and drug problems, disproportionately high welfare representation, disproportionately high incarceration, disproportionately low educational achievement, the highest rate of hypertension and diabetes, and so forth (State of Hawai'i Department of Business 2006). Contemporary native Hawaiian constructions of haole are intrinsically tied to the experience of these conditions—the present-day manifestations of colonization—and the resistance to them. Haoles are "interlopers," colonizers, and occupiers who have succeeded in making Hawaiians "strangers in our own land" (Trask 2002a, 256). In *From a Native Daughter*, Haunani-Kay Trask writes,

We have been occupied by a colonial power whose every law, policy, cultural institution, and collective behavior entrench foreign ways of life in our land and on our people. From the banning of our language and the theft of our sovereignty to forcible territorial incorporation in 1959 as a state of the United States, we have lived as a subordinated Native people in our ancestral home. (Trask 1993, 23)

These constructions can fix haole and Kanaka Maoli as polar opposites instead of recognizing their interrelation, contradictions, contingency, and complexity. Yet most Hawaiian nationalists complicate this simplistic us-versus-them setup by finding space for haole allies. Trask writes that there are "haole exceptions" who have proven themselves in years of struggle. "*Haole* who honestly support us, do so without loud pronouncements about how *they* feel what *we* feel or how they *know*

just what we *mean*. Moreover, they readily acknowledge our leadership" (Trask 1993, 251). On the question of allies, Kekuni Blaisdell, who has a Japanese hānai (similar to adoption but informal) son, says, "Those who share [Kanaka Maoli] values are welcome. We hānai you if you want to live our way" (Blaisdell 2003). Lilikalā Kame'eleihiwa says that the old saying about allies used to be "If you can cook, you can stay," and the new maxim should be "If you love and support us, you can stay" (Kame'eleihiwa and Spivak 2003). These sentiments echo some of the Native American views on "ethnic switching" discussed earlier.

Local Constructions of Haole

If haole-Hawaiian relations find their basis in colonization, haole-local relations were molded in Hawai'i's plantations, where the local itself had its beginnings. The past three decades have seen an explosion of local literature, arts, and cultural studies. Within local cultural studies, two of the strongest debates revolve around origins and definitions of local and what the relationship should be between the local and Hawaiian sovereignty politics. HCE, local humor, and local claims to place all help decenter and question haole authority at the same time that they highlight the dynamic nature of local identity.

The processes of racialization involved in the plantation system have been well documented.¹¹ The main distinction to be upheld through these systems was a class division between haoles and labor (the foundation of the local), but the haole deployed a divide-and-conquer strategy to keep labor from consolidating (a strategy that began to crack with a big strike in 1920 and was broken in the decades after by interracial solidarity).¹² Tactics included physical and social segregation, the pitting of racial/ethnic groups against one another, discriminatory laws and contracts, physical violence and coercion, and a racist ideology. Ronald Takaki wrote, "As planters imported workers to meet their labor needs in the nineteenth century, they created a racially stratified labor structure based on an ideology of white supremacy" (Takaki 1983, 76). This structure was made manifest in the physical layout of the plantation.

Indeed the physical organization of plantation housing reflected, as well as reinforced, a social hierarchy. The manager lived in a mansion with spacious verandas and white columns overlooking the plantation; his foremen and technical employees were

housed in "handsome bungalow cottages." . . . [W]orkers of different nationalities were usually housed in separate buildings or camps. (Takaki 1983, 93)

This segregation carried over beyond the plantation, with haoles establishing their own institutions (schools, clubs, newspapers, social and business networks) and neighborhoods,¹³ and intermixing as little as possible with the new immigrant populations. It is exactly this segregation that produced the conditions giving rise to local culture, language, and politics. Local scholar Louise Kubo writes, "While the haole plantation owners/managers no doubt sought to keep the great unwashed masses at a safe distance, this separation had the concomitant effect of keeping the haoles away from the immigrants and shielding them from haole cultural dominance, including language" (Kubo 1997, 10). Kubo goes on to discuss the emergence of HCE and other elements of local culture as significant elements of local identity.

The question of the origin of the local involves the local construction of haole, since they are relational. Further, some argue that the local emerged as an identity of resistance, as a counterstance to haole, and thus is much more about politics than culture. In this view, the foundational representation of the haole is as the greedy plantation owner. Local scholar Jonathan Okamura (1998) is the strongest proponent of this view. Okamura and those who emphasize local as resistant also tend to construct haole fairly rigidly. Haole is the anti-local, everything the local is not. Such constructions can obscure haole-Hawaiian relations and colonization through a singular focus on a haole-local binary.

One continental scholar has even placed the origins of haole, not just local, in the plantation. Evelyn Nakano Glenn writes, "The consolidation of haole as a racial category occurred with the development of the plantation and the need for the small proprietorial and managerial class to distinguish itself from workers" (Glenn 2002, 207). Such a view privileges a class analysis at the expense of other axes of power and thus erases a hundred years of haole colonization forged via the multiple modes discussed in the previous chapter. It should be clear by now that haole began consolidating itself as a racial category as soon as Cook set foot on the beach. While the plantation was undoubtedly the origin of the local's haole, as I have shown, it was certainly not the origin of the Hawaiian's haole, or haoles' depiction of themselves as a group.

Another group of local scholars argues that local culture and identity are not simply reactions to the haole. For them, many elements of the local have little if anything to do with haole. This group is divided between those who want to promote the local as a model of multicultural harmony (Grant and Ogawa 1993, Takaki 1983) and those who are unwilling to smooth over the disharmony and messiness within the local (Kubo 1997, Fujikane 2000, Chang 1995, Saranillio 2008). The multiculturalists tend to deemphasize the negative aspects of haole. Haole is just one of many groups of people living in racial harmony in Hawai'i.

Those who think more critically about the local see identities as much more complicated, intersected, and conflicted. They tend to recognize the history of colonialism as driven by the haole, but not without the complicity of some segments of the local, particularly local Japanese. Also for them, some locals can be as haole as the most haole of haoles. They recognize the relational, contingent character of identity production and see the current triangulation of social identities as Kanaka Maoli/local/haole. Heated debates rage regarding the firmness and the elasticity of the borders between these identities.

One of the things visitors and scholars frequently note is the extent to which people in Hawai'i openly categorize each other by race. This makes many "mainlanders" uncomfortable, since they are used to a culture that politely pretends to be colorblind. One of the mainstays of local culture is the way it marks, stereotypes, and pokes fun at the different groups in the islands. Haole is far from exempt. Hawai'i's comedians rely heavily on this culture of racial/ethnic humor. Those who take offense, often a marker of upright haoleness, are met with the challenge, "Wat, no can take one joke?" Kubo ties local humor to the cultural importance of humility (often reinforced by teasing): "Local humor acts to keep us from thinking too much of ourselves. . . . One of the ways it does this is by calling attention to race and ethnicity. It takes that which has been a tool of oppression, of public and private shame and humiliation, and through caricature and parody transforms it into a source of humor" (Kubo 1997, 58).

In HCE, haole definitely is as much about how one acts as anything else. In *Pidgin to Da Max*, an early humorous reference on HCE, haole is defined as "Caucasian, or someone who acts like one." The use of "Caucasian" here is further evidence of haole as nonlocal since the book's definitions are given in (often exaggerated) "Standard" English, while

the examples are in HCE. The very next listing is "Haolefied: Just like a haole. *"George went mainlan' an' be ven come back so haolefied I habdly knew beem!"*" (Simonson 1981).

While there are all sorts of constructions of haole in contemporary local culture, for the most part they are variations on a theme, differing in degree. Haole in local discourse is generally arrogant, aggressive, ignorant of island cultures and histories, greedy, loud, and rude. The upper-class character that used to be implicit in haole has largely fallen away as haole has become more class stratified, although one's degree of haoleness still often correlates with class. Haole often wishes it were elsewhere (usually somewhere less "provincial" and always more white); it will not or cannot adapt to the island environment and culture.

The deterritorializing or decentering of haole within local discourse is familiar to those who have spent time in the islands. A self-made bumper sticker on a customized pickup truck I observed one day read, "Locals Only: We Grew Here, U Flew Here." While the "locals only" phrase is common, the second part more specifically does the work of marking haole (and to a lesser extent nonlocal people of color) as outside, neither legitimate in, nor natural to, Hawai'i. At the same time, it counters white ethnocentrism by suggesting that while locals proved their strength and commitment by "growing" here, haoles came by plane, taking the easy route to Hawai'i.

An incident in a class at the University of Hawai'i provides an extremely useful parsing of haole. A haole student from California on a one-year exchange program ended up in one of my classes. Almost from day one she expressed irritation at being called out as a haole. She complained in the usual continental style that it was rude and discriminatory for others to affix this label to her. After a few weeks of listening to this student, our haole professor spoke from her fifty-plus years of experience in Hawai'i. Phyllis Turnbull instructed the student: "You have three choices. You can be a haole, a dumb haole, or a dumb fucking haole. It's up to you." This description stuck with me as it captures the essence of local constructions of haole.

Turnbull later elaborated that at the first level, "haole" is simply a descriptor, used as any racial descriptor is used in Hawai'i. The level of "dumb haole" involves a sociocultural not noticing, such as not bringing food to a gathering, or kicking sand on someone as you run past.¹⁴ Locals will tolerate a certain amount of this behavior, especially

in newcomers, and stereotypes are often used to mark and defuse it. Louise Kubo writes,

Stereotypes . . . help grease the wheels of interethnic interaction. They remind us that others' behavior cannot be judged through our own specific ethnic/cultural lenses. "Haole 'as why," depersonalizes and defuses behavior that might otherwise be interpreted as rude within one's own cultural standards. This understanding of behavior as determined by culture and the recognition of variation between cultures creates space, a kind of leeway, in which cross-cultural interactions can take place. (Kubo 1997, 58)

But "dumb fucking haoles" rarely go unchallenged. They cross the line from relatively benign ignorance to belligerent disrespect for people and place.

The case of Portuguese immigrants illuminates the way racialization often creates its own paradoxes and contradictions and is therefore inherently unstable. The haole elite manipulated Portuguese racialization to fit their various needs. Brought to work on the plantations, the Portuguese were often put in position as lunas (field bosses), bridging the ever-widening distance between haole managers and workers. They were given this middle position in the racial plantation hierarchy due to their assumed "racial closeness" to the haole.

Their hulking size in comparison to the Asians, their European language base, and their Caucasian features associated them with the power elite, while their dark complexions and non-Anglo customs linked them to the working immigrant class. . . . While the Anglo remained separate and aloof from the workers, assuming a status accorded racially based deference symbolized in their sometimes being known as "Father" and "Mother" to the workers, the Portuguese *luna* took the brunt of hostility, resentment, and rebellion. (Grant and Ogawa 1993, 144)

The Portuguese luna enjoyed perks to maintain their loyalty to the haole manager, but they were never considered haole—except when it suited the elite, such as when Thurston wanted to represent Hawai'i as essentially white and therefore included them in the demographic

count. Evidence of the precarious position of the Portuguese is also found in their disenfranchisement following the overthrow. In his letter seeking advice on the construction of a new constitution for the illegal Republic, Sanford Dole singled out "natives and Portuguese" for disenfranchisement because he felt they were "ignorant of the principles of government" (Dole as quoted in Castle 1981, 27).

In processes similar to those involved in the racialization of native Hawaiians, Portuguese were partially included at times and wholly excluded at others. The borders of haole, local, and Hawaiian were continually reworked around, and with, them. In an article about race relations in Hawai'i during World War II, Beth Bailey and David Farber write,

"Caucasian" meant little to island residents. The more important category in Hawaii was "haole" (literally "stranger"), a term with a complicated history that by 1940 designated the relatively affluent whites of Northern European ancestry. Members of ethnic groups that had come to Hawaii to do plantation work, no matter how light-skinned, were not considered haoles. Thus Caucasian Portuguese and Puerto Ricans were not haoles (and were listed in census data as "other Caucasians"). Haoles made up less than 15% of the islands' population. The term "local" often designated the rest of the islands' peoples. (Bailey and Farber 1993, 818–819)

Portuguese or Puerto Ricans who take the initiative on their own to try to pass as haole in the islands are quickly exposed with the public accusation, "No ack!" In some ways this might be seen as the local policing its borders, but in other ways it is consistent with the local cultural ethic of humility, since to act haole is to act with hubris.

Conclusion

Hawai'i could use more scholarship on local constructions of haole that moves beyond the polarized debate over whether local is simply the flip side of haole. Clearly the relationship is more complex. One starting point could be Chabram-Dernersesian's idea that counterdiscourses of whiteness serve multiple purposes in nonwhite communities. How do the counterdiscourses of haole in Kanaka Maoli and local communities serve those communities? How does the fluidity of Hawaiian and

local constructions of haole—colonizer, ally, oppressor, anyone acting superior—help those communities navigate a sea of social and political relations, a sea where the aggressive, insatiable haole tsunami often looms large?

Going back to the chapter title, what is haole anyway at the end of all of this? Haole is all of these constructions produced by haoles, native Hawaiians, and locals, and it is much more. The various haole constructions of haole over the last two centuries all share in the effort to justify and naturalize haole presence in Hawai'i. At first, haole was about claiming and saving the islands, with explicit use of the ideologies of white supremacy and manifest destiny to justify its imperial desires. With that project largely completed with annexation, haole began to sing a very different tune. Rather than aggressively claiming white privilege, haole attempted to blend in, particularly by pretending to become native. Recently, haole has been bent on portraying itself as a victim, and I will discuss this in chapter 4.

Native Hawaiian and local constructions of haole remind us of the contestations inherent in colonial processes, as well as the relational nature of racialization. The interrelated counternarratives of haole highlight the legacies of colonization. While in certain instances they tend to fix haole, there have always been elements in both native and local constructions that recognize the dynamism, contingency, and interrelated nature of these racial productions. With this comes the awareness that one is never just haole, local, or native Hawaiian, and that the way one inhabits any one of those categories is always in process.